

FACT SHEET

Valley County Wind Energy Project

Purpose of the Project

Wind Hunter LLC, a wind energy development company, proposes to construct, operate and maintain a wind energy development in north-central Valley County. The proposed project, known as the Valley County Wind Energy Project (Project), would provide electrical power into the interconnected grid of the western United States and would help accommodate future demand for power in Montana and the region. According to Wind Hunter, the project is expected to bring non-polluting electrical power to homes and businesses, provide revenue to the state school trust, and bring tax benefits to Valley County and the State of Montana.



Wind turbines similar to those proposed by Wind Hunter.

Project Overview

The Project would consist of constructing a wind energy development of up to 500 megawatts (MW) in phases and transmission interconnections of approximately 30 miles each from the wind farm to electrical transmission lines south of the Milk River. A new substation, referred to as Antelope Creek Substation, may be required for future phases of the project. Other Project facilities include a new electrical collector system, a collector substation at the wind farm, access roads, an operations building, and other ancillary facilities.

The first phase would initially generate 50 MW of electricity using 33 turbines, enough power for about 25,000 homes. Future capacity may be increased up to 500 MW with additional wind turbines, related wind farm infrastructure, and transmission system upgrades. The location of the wind farm and the alternative transmission line routes are shown on the attached map.

Wind Farm

Subject to market conditions, the Project is currently envisioned to be constructed in four phases:

- Phase I – 33 turbines (50 MW) in operation by 2008
- Phase II – 63 turbines (100 MW) by 2010
- Phase III – 104 turbines (150 MW) by 2013
- Phase IV – 134 turbines (200 MW) by 2016

The total project area of the four phases of the wind farm is 20,120 acres, with ownership consisting of 6,889 acres of private land leased for wind energy development, 11,279 acres of public lands managed by BLM, and 1,952 acres of State of Montana School Trust Lands. The total area that would be temporarily disturbed by construction activities is about 524 acres. The total area that would be physically occupied by wind turbines, roads, and other facilities is about 113 acres or less than 1% of the total project area.

Wind Hunter would initially install and operate three-bladed 1.5 MW wind turbines on tubular steel structures. The height of the turbines would range from 330 feet to 390 feet from the ground to the blade tip in its highest position, depending on the type and size of the turbine selected.

Transmission Interconnections

A 69 kV (69,000 volts) transmission line would deliver power to the transmission grid for the Project's proposed first phase. The new

69 kV transmission line would terminate at the existing NorthWestern Energy Richardson Coulee Substation, about 10 miles west of Glasgow. Equipment upgrades to the substation would be required to accommodate the interconnection. Power from the initial phases of the Project could be delivered to NorthWestern Energy or to Western Area Power Administration's (Western) transmission systems. Later phases of the wind farm would require a second interconnect line of 230 kV from the wind farm to Western's transmission system, and also may require transmission upgrades from Fort Peck into the Great Falls area or other points on the Montana transmission grid. As proposed, both lines would be built in one right-of-way (ROW). The first phase 69 kV line would occupy a portion of the ROW and the later 230 kV line would be built parallel in the same ROW.

In the northern and central portions of the project area, both the 69 kV and 230 kV transmission lines would utilize H-frame structures (wood or steel). Depending on structure type and terrain, structures for each of the lines would be spaced 600 to 1,000 feet apart with 5 to 8 structures per mile. Typical structure heights would range from 60 to 75 feet. In this area, the proposed ROW width to accommodate both H-frame lines is expected to be 250 feet.

In the southern portion of the project area near the Milk River valley, each line would be strung on single pole structures rather than H-frame structures to reduce potential land use and visual impacts. The single pole, single circuit structures would be made of steel or wood, and would be spaced between 400 to 800 feet apart (depending on pole type selected and terrain). For the single pole design, there would be between 6 and 13 structures per mile depending on pole height, typically 70 to 110 feet. Where single poles are proposed, the ROW width to accommodate both lines is expected to be

175 feet. Alternative configurations and alignments will be evaluated by the agencies during the environmental review process.

Proposed Project Schedule

- Public Scoping Meetings – May 2005
- Environmental Review Document – Late Summer/Early Fall 2005
- Public Review and Comment Period – 30 Days Following Environmental Review Document Submission
- Public Meeting – During Comment Period
- Response to Comments – Fall 2005
- Decision Notice Concerning BLM Grant Right-of-Way (ROW) and DEQ Certificate of Compliance – (Based On Environmental Analysis) – Winter 2005/2006
- Finalize Phase I Engineering Design – Spring 2007
- Begin Construction – Spring 2007
- Commercial Operation – Winter 2007



1.5 MW wind turbine, Esbjerg, Denmark.

For More Information

Contact BLM representatives Scott Powers, Project Manager at (406) 896-5319; or John Fahlgren, Assistant Field Office Manager, BLM Glasgow Field Office at (406) 228-3757; or DEQ representative Tom Ring, Project Manager at (406) 444-6785.

